Office of the Chief Electoral Officer

2013–2014 Estimates

Report on Plans and Priorities

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Chief Electoral Officer's Message

Elections Canada published its *Report on the Evaluations of the 41st General Election of May 2, 2011* in November 2012. Our post-event surveys indicate that 95 percent of electors were satisfied with the conduct of the general election. Electors were aware of the election (98 percent); they knew about the authorized pieces of identification that they needed to present before they could vote (89 percent); and they were satisfied with the accessibility of the polling sites (98 percent).

Based on this and other international democracy indexes, Canada has a sound electoral system. This, however, is no reason to be complacent. In my view, there are two areas in which the health of our democracy is increasingly under pressure. One of these is citizen engagement; the other is citizens' trust in their electoral system.

With respect to citizen engagement, voter turnout – the most basic indicator of democracy – has been in steady decline for over two decades. The most troubling thing about this trend is that it is in large part attributable to generational replacement; that is, today's young Canadians are much less likely to vote than their parents or grandparents were at the same age, and they are less likely to take up the habit of voting as they grow older. This means that unless this trend is reversed, fewer and fewer Canadians will vote in future elections. To mitigate this trend, Elections Canada is working hard to engage young Canadians, and it continues to seek the broad collaboration of civil society partners in this effort.

Second, certain events may have eroded Canadians' trust in the electoral system. I think here of allegations of fraudulent telephone calls made during the May 2011 general election as well as irregularities at the polls in the riding of Etobicoke Centre (Ontario).

Elections Canada takes both of these events and the various issues they raise very seriously, and we are working within the current legal framework to develop clear, tangible and realizable solutions to them before the next general election. We will address each event in detail in separate reports to Parliament in spring 2013.

Our other plans and priorities for 2013–2014 will focus on continued support of the electoral boundaries readjustment process. Once that process is complete, which we expect will be in fall 2013, Elections Canada will have seven months to implement the new boundaries. Most of this work will be accomplished by March 2014.

We will also continue to carry out our three-year plan to make administrative improvements to the services we provide to electors. These improvements aim to provide more convenient services to electors; reduce barriers to registration, identification and accessibility; and foster the engagement of young Canadians.

However, administrative actions alone will not be enough to properly address a number of issues. Recent events and our post-election evaluations have reinforced the need to take immediate steps to modernize the electoral framework. This is something that I have supported beginning with my June 2010 report *Responding to Changing Needs – Recommendations from the Chief Electoral Officer of Canada Following the 40th General Election*, which proposed a series of necessary changes to the *Canada Elections Act*.

The reports that I will submit to Parliament in spring 2013 will present further recommendations for legislative change. These aim to enhance Canadians' trust in their electoral system, improve the services they receive during an election and strengthen the electoral framework set out in the *Canada Elections Act*. Elections Canada looks forward to working with Parliament in the coming fiscal year to review these recommendations.

My hope is that parliamentarians will consider these recommendations and enact the appropriate legislation by spring 2014. This will enable Elections Canada to fully integrate these changes in time for the 2015 federal election. These changes will ensure that the electoral system continues to meet Canadians' high expectations.

Marc Mayrand
Chief Electoral Officer of Canada

Section I: Organizational Overview

Raison d'être

The Office of the Chief Electoral Officer, commonly known as Elections Canada, is an independent, non-partisan agency that reports directly to Parliament. Its mandate is to:

- be prepared to conduct a federal general election, by-election or referendum
- administer the political financing provisions of the *Canada Elections Act*
- monitor compliance with and enforce electoral legislation
- carry out investigations into allegations that would amount to offences under the Act
- conduct voter education and information programs
- provide support to the independent commissions in charge of adjusting the boundaries of federal electoral districts following each decennial census
- carry out studies on alternative voting methods and, with the approval of parliamentarians, test electronic voting processes for future use during electoral events

Responsibilities

In fulfilling its mandate, Elections Canada appoints, trains and supports returning officers and retains the services of 30 field liaison officers across Canada. It also maintains the National Register of Electors, which is used to prepare preliminary lists of electors at the start of electoral events, as well as electoral geography information, which provides the basis for maps and other geographic products used during electoral events.

The agency also:

- registers political entities, including political parties, electoral district associations, candidates, leadership contestants, third parties that engage in election advertising and referendum committees
- administers the allowances, reimbursements and subsidies paid to eligible candidates, registered political parties and auditors
- monitors compliance with the *Canada Elections Act*, including compliance with political financing rules, during and between elections

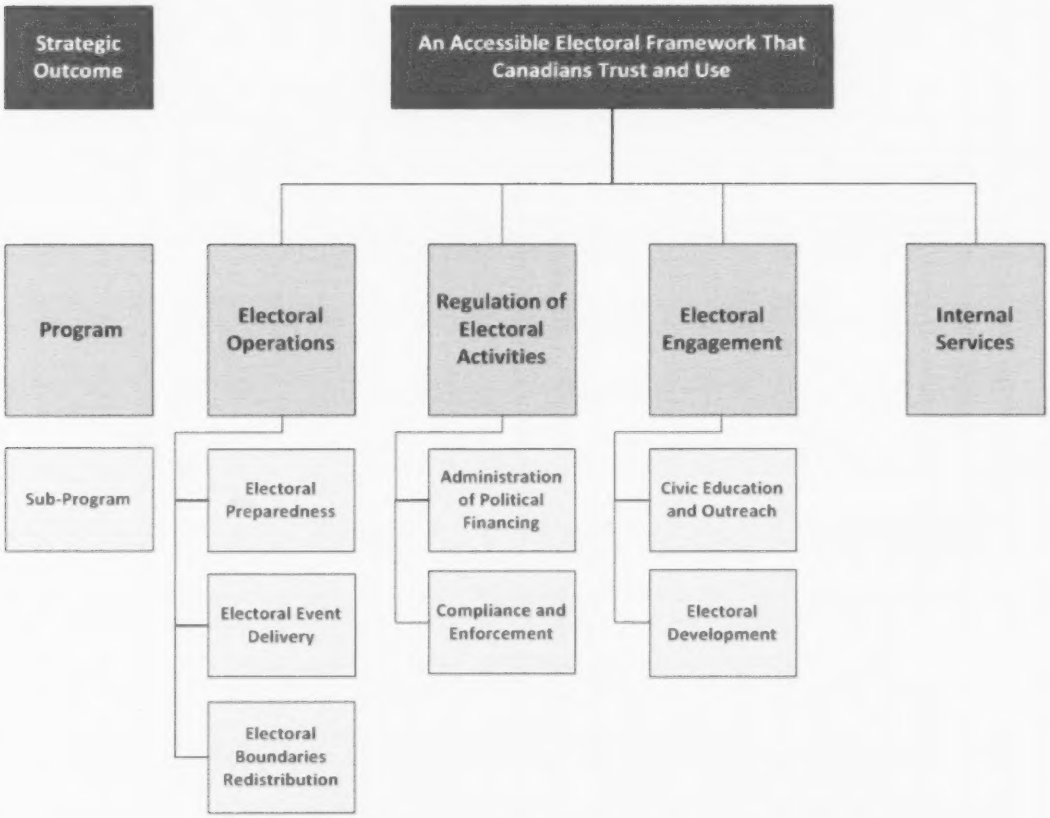
- discloses information on registered parties and electoral district associations, registered parties' nomination and leadership contestants, candidates, third parties and referendum committees, including their financial returns
- recommends to Parliament amendments for the better administration of the *Canada Elections Act*. It does this by submitting a recommendations report after a general election as well as by providing expert advice when Parliament studies electoral reform.

In addition, the Chief Electoral Officer appoints the Commissioner of Canada Elections. The role of the Commissioner is to protect the integrity of the electoral process by ensuring that the *Canada Elections Act* and the *Referendum Act* are complied with and enforced. The Commissioner carries out his or her duties independently of any political or government interference and is assisted by investigators, lawyers and administrative personnel. In carrying out the Office's mandate, the Commissioner is guided by the principles of independence, impartiality, fairness and good faith.

The Chief Electoral Officer also appoints the Broadcasting Arbitrator. The Broadcasting Arbitrator is responsible for allocating free and paid broadcasting time among political parties and for arbitrating disputes that may arise between parties and broadcasters.

Strategic Outcome and Program Alignment Architecture

Elections Canada has a single strategic outcome, supported by the following Program Alignment Architecture (PAA):



Organizational Priorities

The tables below summarize how Elections Canada's priorities contribute to its strategic outcome.

Priority 1	Type	Programs
Enable the electoral boundaries readjustment process and implement new electoral boundaries	Previously committed to	• Electoral Operations • Internal Services

Description

Why is this a priority?

Federal electoral districts and the distribution of seats in the House of Commons are reviewed and adjusted after each decennial (10-year) census to ensure that electoral districts reflect population changes and movement among and within regions. This electoral boundaries readjustment process is mandated by the *Constitution Act, 1867*, the *Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act* and the *Fair Representation Act*. The *Fair Representation Act*, which received royal assent in December 2011, amends the representation formula set out in the *Constitution Act, 1867* by creating 30 additional electoral districts. It also shortens the time frame for both the readjustment process and the implementation of the new boundaries.

The readjustment process is led by an independent commission in each province.[1] The commissions began their deliberations in early 2012 after the Chief Electoral Officer received the 2011 census population counts from the Chief Statistician of Canada. Elections Canada is responsible for providing support to these commissions. Once this process is finished, Elections Canada has seven months to implement the new electoral boundaries.

Plans for meeting the priority

In 2013–2014, Elections Canada will continue to provide the commissions with all of the professional, financial and administrative services they need to finalize their duties. The readjustment process is expected to finish in fall 2013; the agency then has seven months to implement the new electoral boundaries. This work includes appointing and training returning officers in the new electoral districts, adjusting the lists of electors, producing maps of the new electoral districts and registering the new electoral district associations. Most of these activities will take place in 2013–2014. During this time, we also plan to align the new polling divisions with Statistics Canada's census geographic boundaries; this will save time and reduce costs.

[1] Commissions are not needed for Yukon, the Northwest Territories or Nunavut because each territory constitutes a single electoral district.

Priority 2	Type	Programs
Maintain trust and improve compliance	New	• Electoral Operations • Regulation of Electoral Activities • Electoral Engagement • Internal Services

Description

Why is this a priority?

Certain events that occurred during the 41st general election may have eroded Canadians' trust in the electoral system.

The first event concerned complaints from electors, alleging that they had received various forms of fraudulent telephone calls purporting to be from Elections Canada or a particular candidate or party. The Commissioner of Canada Elections immediately undertook to investigate these allegations and continues to do so.

The second event involved irregularities at the polls in the riding of Etobicoke Centre (Ontario). In response, Elections Canada initiated an independent review of compliance with voting day procedures.

Plans for meeting the priority

While the Supreme Court of Canada upheld the election results in the riding of Etobicoke Centre, Elections Canada is committed to improving compliance with procedures at the polls. The agency will report to Parliament in spring 2013 on the findings of the compliance review of voting day procedures, which it initiated in 2012. In 2013–2014, the agency will begin to implement the resulting Compliance Action Plan.

Elections Canada is also developing a pilot project for the 2015 general election to test a more streamlined way to manage and operate voting at both advance and ordinary polls. This project is expected to result in improved compliance with operational procedures, cost savings, better working conditions for election officers and better services to electors. This project will require parliamentary approval in winter 2014. The agency will engage key stakeholders as this initiative proceeds.

Elections Canada will report to Parliament by the end of March 2013 on the administrative and legal issues concerning privacy and communications with electors in the context of evolving technologies. This report will include a number of recommendations to strengthen the electoral framework. Elections Canada looks forward to working with Parliament in 2013–2014 to review these recommendations.

As a result of its zero-based-budgeting review, Elections Canada has reallocated resources to preserve or enhance the capacity of the political financing program and the Office of the Commissioner of Canada Elections as well as to establish an operational compliance unit. In 2013–2014, the Commissioner will focus increased attention on priority files, improve the way in which Canadians can bring issues to his Office's attention, and report to Canadians on complaints received. In the medium term, more effective compliance and enforcement will require legislative reforms, and in 2013–2014, Elections Canada will develop recommendations in this regard that will lead to a final report in the spring of 2014.

Priority 3	Type	Programs
Improve services and engage youth	Previously committed to	• Electoral Operations • Regulation of Electoral Activities • Electoral Engagement • Internal Services

Description

Why is this a priority?

The needs of electors are evolving: they expect to exercise their democratic right to vote using a modern electoral process that incorporates technological advances and provides more convenient and accessible services. Some groups of electors, particularly youth, continue to face barriers to registration and voting. Young Canadians are much less likely to vote than their parents or grandparents were at the same age, and they are less likely to take up the habit of voting as they grow older. With the next election fixed at October 2015, Elections Canada has a window of opportunity before returning to election readiness to focus on selected administrative improvements.

Plans for meeting the priority

Elections Canada's business cycle spans the period between two general elections. Thus, its efforts to meet this priority will proceed on a multi-year basis. In 2013–2014, the agency will implement the second year of its three-year plan to improve services to electors. It is focusing on initiatives that are feasible under the current legislative framework.

To provide more convenient services, Elections Canada intends to:

- modernize the field voter registration system
- enhance our online enquiries services

To reduce barriers to registration and voting, Elections Canada plans to:

- extend the use of the voter information card as proof of identity and address to all electors, while adopting a new overall voter identification policy to simplify the administration of the voter identification regime
- conduct registration drives before the next election is called
- engage youth by sharing knowledge with key stakeholders
- extend on-site special ballot voting to additional locations

Risk Analysis

Two main risks will require our attention over the next fiscal year.

- Any legislative improvements need to be enacted by spring 2014 to give Elections Canada enough time to fully integrate them in time for the 2015 general election. In 2010, the Chief Electoral Officer made recommendations to Parliament to modernize the electoral framework, and these were well received. Further recommendations to strengthen the electoral framework will be made in spring 2013 in the Chief Electoral Officer's reports on communications with electors and compliance with voting day procedures. Elections Canada is prepared to assist parliamentarians by facilitating their review of its recommendations and proposed changes to legislation. The agency is also prepared to adjust its plans for the 2015 election as required to factor in any legislative change that Parliament enacts in time.
- Fiscal restraint measures affect Elections Canada's ability to continue to deliver and enhance its programs. To address these pressures, the agency completed a zero-based-budgeting review in 2012–2013. While the agency can reallocate some resources to its highest priorities, the review confirmed that Elections Canada lacks the funds required to continue to finance a number of indeterminate positions going forward. As a result, in 2012–2013, we began implementing workforce adjustment measures and informed employees, on January 15, 2013, that 32 encumbered positions would be eliminated.

Planning Summary

This section summarizes the agency's plans, priorities and expected budgets for the next three fiscal years.

Financial Resources (Planned Spending – $ thousands)

Total Budgetary Expenditures (Main Estimates) 2013–2014	Planned Spending 2013–2014	Planned Spending 2014–2015	Planned Spending 2015–2016
115,854	115,854	97,115	89,592

Human Resources (Full-Time Equivalents – FTEs)

2013–2014	2014–2015	2015–2016
488	468	458

Planning Summary Table ($ thousands)

Program	Actual Spending 2010–2011	Actual Spending 2011–2012	Forecast Spending 2012–2013*	Planned Spending		
				2013–2014	2014–2015	2015–2016
Electoral Operations	52,728	202,833	36,992	36,641	35,246	36,063
Regulation of Electoral Activities**	37,272	102,958	38,073	28,072	19,827	12,304
Electoral Engagement	9,809	7,893	9,314	8,939	9,063	8,246
Subtotal	99,809	313,684	84,379	73,652	64,136	56,613

*Forecast spending for 2012–2013 is significantly lower than actual spending for the last two fiscal years, especially for 2011–2012. This is because a large portion of the expenditures from those years were non-recurrent expenditures for the conduct of the 41st general election, held on May 2, 2011.

**The gradual reduction in planned spending on the Regulation of Electoral Activities program over these three fiscal years is primarily a result of phasing out the quarterly allowances to political parties, as set out in *An Act to implement certain provisions of the 2011 budget as updated on June 6, 2011 and other measures.*

Planning Summary Table for Internal Services ($ thousands)

Program	Actual Spending 2010–2011	Actual Spending 2011–2012	Forecast Spending 2012–2013	Planned Spending		
				2013–2014	2014–2015	2015–2016
Internal Services*	47,209	35,668	40,859	42,202	32,979	32,979

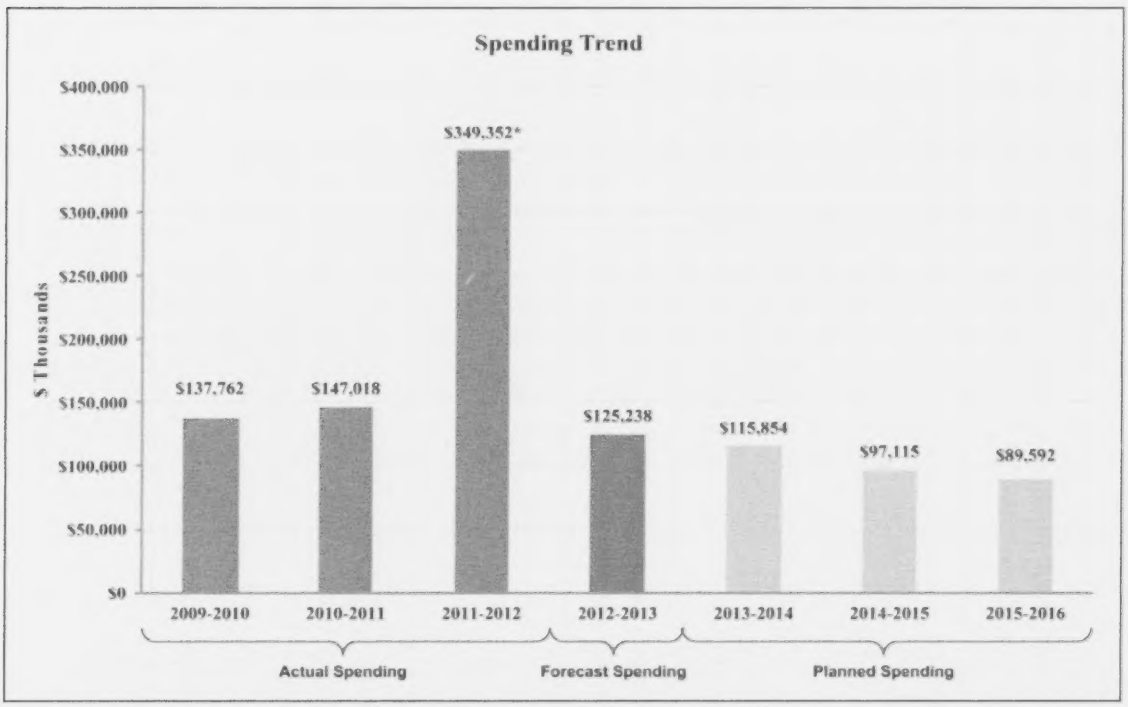
*The decrease in actual spending between 2010–2011 and 2011–2012 is partly the result of refocusing resources to deliver the 41st general election (part of the Electoral Operations program). Internal Services for 2012–2013 and 2013–2014 include one-time spending for the Office Consolidation and Relocation project. The project will end in 2013–2014.

Planning Summary Total ($ thousands)

Strategic Outcome Programs and Internal Services	Actual Spending 2010–2011	Actual Spending 2011–2012	Forecast Spending 2012–2013	Planned Spending		
				2013–2014	2014–2015	2015–2016
Total	147,018	349,352	125,238	115,854	97,115	89,592

Expenditure Profile

Departmental Spending Trend



*The significant variances in spending between the 2011–2012 fiscal year and the remaining years are a result of the 41st general election, held in 2011–2012.

Elections Canada's Financial Framework

While Elections Canada performs a number of ongoing functions, a key component of its mandate is to be prepared to conduct general elections, by-elections and referendums. Under our parliamentary system, by-elections can happen at any time. While a fixed date of October 19, 2015, for the 42nd general election facilitates Elections Canada's long-term planning, six provincial and territorial elections are also scheduled to be held in the fall of 2015. These overlapping electoral events will pose challenges to electors, political entities and Elections Canada. Under these circumstances, should a federal election be called earlier than expected, Elections Canada will need to be ready.

The agency's dual funding mechanism and planning practices are a unique characteristic of its mandate. Elections Canada is funded in part by an annual appropriation that covers the salaries of its permanent staff and is not affected by the electoral cycle. Given the unpredictability of electoral events, the agency also has a statutory authority that allows it to draw directly from the Consolidated Revenue Fund.

Elections Canada's statutory authority covers all of its other expenses. Some of these expenses are unpredictable and are not included in its planned spending, such as those related to by-elections.

Estimates by Vote

For information on our organizational appropriations, see the *2013–2014 Main Estimates*[1] publication.

Section II: Analysis of Programs by Strategic Outcome

Strategic Outcome

The Office of the Chief Electoral Officer operates toward one strategic outcome:

An Accessible Electoral Framework That Canadians Trust and Use

Achieving the strategic outcome is facilitated by a Program Alignment Architecture (PAA) consisting of three programs that are directly beneficial to Canadians.

Program	Expected Results
Electoral Operations	The electoral process is accessible and administered fairly and efficiently.
Regulation of Electoral Activities	Canadians have confidence in the fairness of the administration and enforcement of electoral legislation.
Electoral Engagement	Canadians make informed decisions about their engagement in the electoral process.

A fourth program, Internal Services, contributes to the agency's organizational priorities by enabling the other three programs to achieve their expected results.

Program: Electoral Operations

Program Description

This program allows Elections Canada to deliver fair and efficient electoral events whenever they may be required so that Canadians are able to exercise their democratic right to vote in a federal general election, by-election or referendum. To this end, the agency provides an accessible and constantly improved electoral process that is responsive to the needs of electors.

Financial Resources ($ thousands)

Total Budgetary Expenditures (Main Estimates) 2013–2014	Planned Spending 2013–2014	Planned Spending 2014–2015*	Planned Spending 2015–2016*
36,641	36,641	35,246	36,063

*The decrease in planned spending in 2014–2015 is mainly a result of the independent commissions being set to complete the readjustment of federal electoral boundaries in 2013–2014, while the increase in 2015–2016 is a result of planned expenditures related to election readiness.

Human Resources (Full-Time Equivalents – FTEs)

2013–2014	2014–2015	2015–2016
202	193	190

Program Expected Results	Performance Indicators
The electoral process is administrated fairly and efficiently.	• Percentage of Canadians who believe that Elections Canada administers elections in a fair manner • Cost of elections per elector
Elections Canada is prepared to hold electoral events whenever they are called.	• Percentage of electoral offices that are fully functional within seven days of the start of an electoral event
Canadians have opportunities to exercise their democratic right to vote.	• Percentage of electors who report not voting for administrative reasons • Percentage of polls that open on time • Percentage of electors who are satisfied with their experience of casting a ballot
Canadians have the information and support they need to participate in elections.	• Percentage of Canadians who are aware of the variety of voting methods available • Percentage of Canadians who know how and where to vote

Program Expected Results	Performance Indicators
Canadians are provided with timely electoral results that accurately reflect the choices they have made.	• Percentage of polls reporting preliminary results after they close • Variance between preliminary results and validated results • Variance between reported results and results after judicial recounts
Independent electoral commissions have the capacity to carry out their obligations under the *Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act*.	• Percentage of commissioners who are satisfied with the services and support they have received from Elections Canada

Planning Highlights

In 2013–2014, Elections Canada will continue to manage electoral events by delivering any by-elections that are called.

Between elections, the agency is responsible for maintaining the National Register of Electors, as well as geographic databases, to reflect population movement and growth. From the Register, Elections Canada prepares annual lists of electors for all electoral districts and associated polling division maps. These are distributed to members of Parliament and, on request, to registered political parties by November 15 of each year, as prescribed by the *Canada Elections Act*. Elections Canada keeps these maps and lists of electors current in the event that a by-election is called; it also provides them to provincial and territorial electoral agencies where agreements are in place to support their electoral events.

If by-elections are called, the agency will test certain initiatives that are aimed at improving compliance and record-keeping at the polls. However, as part of its fiscal restraint plan, Elections Canada will not implement other service improvements for by-elections held before 2014 or invest resources in referendum readiness.

Activities in Support of Organizational Priorities in 2013–2014

The following planned initiatives within the Electoral Operations program will also contribute to the agency's organizational priorities in 2013–2014.

Implement the New Electoral Boundaries

In 2013–2014, Elections Canada will continue to provide the commissions conducting the electoral boundaries readjustment process with the professional, financial and administrative services they need to finalize their work. The readjustment process is expected to conclude in fall 2013.

The resulting representation order, which describes the new electoral districts established by the commissions, is expected to be proclaimed by the Governor in Council in September 2013;

Elections Canada then has a seven-month period in which to implement the new boundaries. This work includes appointing and training returning officers in the new electoral districts, adjusting the lists of electors, producing maps of the new electoral districts and registering the new electoral district associations. Most of these activities will take place in 2013–2014.

Elections Canada also plans to redesign and modernize the current process of maintaining polling divisions and align the new polling divisions with Statistics Canada's census geographic boundaries. The existing maintenance process, which was developed in the mid-1990s, is complex, costly and time-consuming. Elections Canada will implement the new maintenance process in 2013–2014. We will also develop an online editing tool that will allow returning officers to electronically modify and certify polling division boundaries.

Improve Compliance with Voting Day Procedures

Following reports of administrative irregularities in the riding of Etobicoke Centre (Ontario) during the May 2011 general election, we initiated an independent review of compliance with voting day procedures. Elections Canada will report to Parliament in April 2013 on the findings of the review and on the resulting Compliance Action Plan. We will begin to implement the action plan in 2013–2014 with the aim of improving compliance with standards and procedures on voting days for the 2015 election and beyond.

Elections Canada will also develop a pilot project for the 2015 general election to test a more streamlined way to manage and operate voting at both advance and ordinary polls. We expect to complete the development of the new model in 2013–2014 and will request parliamentary approval in winter 2014. The agency will engage key stakeholders as this initiative progresses.

Enhance Election Officer Training

In response to the review of compliance with voting day procedures and the opportunity afforded by a fixed election date in October 2015, Elections Canada intends to make a significant investment in modernizing and enhancing election officer training for the 2015 general election. For each election, returning officers must hire and train 500 to 800 election workers in their electoral district. This is often a challenge given the short period of time for training, the increasing complexity of the voting process (e.g. voter identification requirements), and traditional training methods.

In 2013–2014, we will complete an assessment of our current election officer training program, including the recommendations arising from the compliance review. We will then develop a 2015 training plan that makes the program more effective and ensures better compliance with standards and procedures. In developing the plan, Elections Canada will consider:

- incorporating the principles of adult learning and more modern instructional techniques such as e-learning in addition to videos and hands-on exercises
- using incremental assessment to better ensure that election officers have mastered the subject matter and can be assigned to the appropriate positions
- recruiting and training potential election officers before an election is called

The agency will continue to work with provincial and territorial electoral management bodies to develop standard approaches and share best practices for recruiting and training election officers. We will also engage key stakeholders, including returning officers, election workers, provincial and territorial electoral management bodies and political parties, to review and provide feedback on the training plan and approach. Development of new training tools, techniques and core content will also begin in 2013–2014.

Modernize Voter Registration

For the 2015 general election, Elections Canada will modernize its field voter registration system to give authorized election officers access to a secure and centralized national voters list over the Internet. This will enable us to offer voter registration services wherever there is an Internet connection – in our 120 satellite offices and, potentially, at other targeted locations where voter registration drives are conducted, such as college and university campuses. It will also enable us to offer our new online voter registration service (E-Registration) during the election, which would permit some address changes and limited additions. Legislative change, as recommended by the Chief Electoral Officer in 2010, is required to offer full E-Registration services to electors, such as new registrations.

The technology developed for this project is the first phase in our longer-term plan to allow electors to vote at any polling site in their electoral district. It will also eventually allow candidates and political parties real-time access to the most up-to-date voters list data, including who has voted, and enable us to provide more convenient options to vote by special ballot. In 2013–2014, Elections Canada will largely complete the design and development phases of the new computer application.

Renew Public Enquiries Services

The agency will continue its work in 2013–2014 to renew its public enquiries services, both between and during elections. We will complete procurement for this project and work with the successful bidder to customize and integrate the new services and systems into our public enquiries business process.

Once this project is completed in 2014, specific enhancements will include:

- a more centralized and streamlined way for the public to send e-mail messages and complaints through the Elections Canada website
- an updated system for tracking contact from the public across various forms of communication
- outsourcing to the private sector for a number of call centre agents to respond to telephone enquiries received during an election and taking advantage of established partnerships for call centre services with other government departments

Extend Use of the Voter Information Card

During the May 2011 general election, electors in certain locations, such as seniors' residences, were authorized to use their voter information card (VIC) along with another piece of authorized identification to prove their identity and address when voting. Based on the success of this initiative, Elections Canada plans to extend the use of the VIC to all electors in the 2015 general election. In 2013–2014, we will complete an implementation plan and engage key stakeholders in this initiative.

Develop the Electoral Reminder Program for 2015

One of Elections Canada's key roles is communicating with Canadians to ensure that they understand the electoral process and are registered to vote. In 2013–2014, Elections Canada will begin planning and developing the electoral reminder program for the 42nd general election. This will be a comprehensive, multi-channel communications program designed to inform electors about when, where and how to register and vote during the election as well as how to officially file a complaint with the agency.

Continue to Improve the Accessibility of Programs and Processes

Research completed in March 2012, and a series of meetings held after the 41st general election with a sample of national and regional organizations representing electors with disabilities, identified a number of ways to improve the accessibility of Elections Canada's information products. We will begin to implement these recommendations in 2013–2014. We intend to update our electoral information products for the 2015 general election by using a more consistent design and extending the use of plain language.

We will also develop a training program in partnership with a national organization representing electors with a wide variety of disabilities. The training will be offered to communications staff and those responsible for developing field outreach programming. The goal is to raise awareness of accessibility principles and practices in the workplace and to incorporate them into the design of electoral programs and services.

Accessibility of the voting process remains a priority for Elections Canada for the 2015 general election and beyond, and our research and discussions with disability groups have identified a number of measures that we can take to make improvements in this area. Preliminary findings indicate that the major barriers faced by these electors can be grouped into four broad categories:

- physical environment: accessibility of polling sites
- voting methods: accessibility of the voting process at the polls or by mail to ensure the independence and secrecy of the vote for all electors
- information and communication: accessibility and reach of information
- attitudinal, cultural and social factors: lack of election worker training and community outreach related to people with disabilities and elections

Elections Canada recognizes that some outstanding commitments to polling site accessibility remain, including implementing a new accessibility standard, conducting site accessibility inspections and continuing to improve signage. In 2013–2014, we will complete our review of the evaluations and complaints received from the 2011 election. This, combined with the results from our research and discussions with disability groups, will be factored into a 2015 accessibility plan outlining the improvements for the next general election. In 2013–2014, we will complete the planning and begin to develop the improved products and services in consultation with stakeholders.

Conduct Voter Registration Drives Prior to the Next Election

Certain groups of electors, such as youth, continue to register in smaller numbers than others. To address this issue, Elections Canada will conduct targeted voter registration drives before the next election is called. In 2013–2014, we will initiate outreach with key stakeholders regarding voter registration drives that target young electors on college and university campuses as well as electors living in Aboriginal communities.

Expand Voting by Special Ballot

Under the Special Voting Rules, electors who cannot or choose not to vote at the advance polls or on election day can vote by special ballot, either by mail or at their local Elections Canada office. To make voting more convenient for certain groups who find it difficult to vote, Elections Canada will expand this service for the 2015 general election by offering on-site special ballot voting in locations such as university and college campuses and Aboriginal friendship centres. In 2013–2014, we will complete the implementation plan that reflects the scope of this initiative. That scope will be defined in the business case completed in winter 2013. We will also engage key stakeholders, such as political parties, to design an oversight mechanism that involves candidates' representatives.

Monitor Developments in Internet Voting

Elections Canada is scaling back its efforts on Internet voting and will delay conducting an I-voting pilot project until after the next general election. However, we will continue to monitor such trials and developments in other jurisdictions to evaluate the feasibility of undertaking an I-voting project at a later date.

Program: Regulation of Electoral Activities

Program Description

This program provides Canadians with an electoral process that is fair, transparent and in compliance with the *Canada Elections Act*. Within this program, Elections Canada is responsible for administering the political financing provisions of the Act. This includes monitoring compliance, disclosing and reporting financial activities and enforcing electoral legislation.

Financial Resources ($ thousands)

Total Budgetary Expenditures (Main Estimates) 2013–2014	Planned Spending 2013–2014*	Planned Spending 2014–2015*	Planned Spending 2015–2016*
28,072	28,072	19,827	12,304

*The gradual reduction in planned spending over the next three fiscal years is primarily a result of phasing out the quarterly allowances to political parties.

Human Resources (Full-Time Equivalents – FTEs)

2013–2014	2014–2015	2015–2016
76	76	75

Program Expected Results	Performance Indicators
Political entities are transparent in their use of financial resources.	• Percentage of financial returns that are submitted within four months of election day • Number of substantive corrections and amendments required to returns
Political entities understand and comply with their obligations and responsibilities under Canada's electoral legislation.	• Percentage of candidates who understand their obligations and responsibilities regarding contribution limits, as established by the *Canada Elections Act* • Number of cases of non-compliance that are subject to compliance measures

Planning Highlights

In 2013–2014, Elections Canada will continue to administer the provisions of the *Canada Elections Act* and related legislation and to work with political entities. Activities include auditing the financial returns of political entities, including finalizing candidates' returns from the 41st general election; determining reimbursement and subsidy amounts to be paid to political entities; monitoring compliance with the contribution limits; maintaining the registration of

political entities; publishing registration information and financial returns on its website; and helping political entities meet their obligations under the Act by offering training and ongoing support. Budget reallocations in 2013–2014 will enable Elections Canada to continue to offer training in political financing to political entities.

Activities in Support of Organizational Priorities in 2013–2014

The following planned initiatives within the Regulation of Electoral Activities program will also contribute to the agency's organizational priorities in 2013–2014.

Implement the New Electoral Boundaries

Implementing the new electoral boundaries will generate a significant amount of work for the Political Financing Sector in 2013–2014. This work will include registering the new electoral district associations, reconfirming existing associations and ensuring that the political financing systems capture the new electoral districts. We will also assist the political parties during this transition.

Improve Reporting on Political Financing

While information on political financing activities is available on the Elections Canada website, the agency will develop an annual political financing report that presents the information in a more logical manner and that also analyzes and identifies potential trends. This report will enable us to raise awareness of legislative provisions; it will also give stakeholders general information about, and engage them in, the importance of complying with the political financing requirements.

Conduct a Horizontal Audit of 2011 Contributions

The agency's horizontal audit program aims to identify individuals who have made contributions in excess of the annual contribution limit to a combination of three political entities (nomination contestants, registered associations and candidates) affiliated with the same party in an election. In 2013–2014, we will conduct a horizontal audit of contributions made in 2011 to these three entities to identify individuals who potentially contributed in excess of the contribution limit. As required by the *Canada Elections Act*, any political entity that received excess funds will be required to pay them back to the contributor or the Receiver General for Canada.

Continue to Improve Stakeholder Information

Elections Canada will continue to review its information and tools to ensure that they are presented to our stakeholders in a consistent, easy-to-access and easily understandable format. In 2012–2013, we completed handbooks for leadership contestants and candidates; in 2013–2014, we will complete handbooks for nomination contestants and electoral district associations.

Improve Enforcement Processes

In recent years, the Office of the Commissioner of Canada Elections has been investigating a growing number of matters that are complex and sensitive and that are drawing increasing media attention.

The Commissioner's role, which is to ensure that political parties, candidates, third parties and electors abide by the *Canada Elections Act*, is crucial to maintaining public confidence in the electoral system. While the Commissioner must act diligently, the penal nature of his investigations requires that they be conducted in a manner that meets the highest standards of fairness, consistent with the procedures and requirements of the criminal process.

For 2013–2014, the Chief Electoral Officer has reallocated resources to the Office of the Commissioner so as to assist with its mandate. The Commissioner will focus increasing attention on priority files, referring appropriate cases to the Director of Public Prosecutions and dealing with lesser matters using informal means, such as caution letters and compliance agreements.

Elections Canada will also be looking at ways to improve the manner in which Canadians can bring issues to the attention of the Commissioner and ensure that facts which may be important to his investigations are provided in a timely fashion. In addition, while continuing to preserve the privacy of individuals and the confidentiality of investigations, the Commissioner will take steps to better inform Canadians of the number and types of complaints received by his Office as well as the manner in which they are dealt with.

In the medium term, more effective compliance and enforcement will require legislative reforms. Some elements of reform will be included in the report on communications with electors that Elections Canada will submit to Parliament in spring 2013. However, a broader review of the compliance and enforcement regime under the *Canada Elections Act* is necessary to better align its regulatory requirements with compliance and enforcement mechanisms. For example, regulatory compliance may be better dealt with by additional administrative or civil measures rather than the current criminal process, and more serious offences could be handled by increasing sanctions. In 2013–2014, Elections Canada will develop recommendations in this regard in consultation with the Advisory Committee of Political Parties and submit the resulting report to Parliament in the spring of 2014.

Program: Electoral Engagement

Program Description

This program promotes and sustains the Canadian electoral process. It provides Canadians with electoral education and information programs so that they can make informed decisions about their engagement in the electoral process. The program also aims to improve the electoral framework by consulting and sharing electoral practices with other stakeholders.

Financial Resources ($ thousands)

Total Budgetary Expenditures (Main Estimates) 2013–2014	Planned Spending 2013–2014*	Planned Spending 2014–2015*	Planned Spending 2015–2016
8,939	8,939	9,063	8,246

*Electoral Engagement for 2013–2014 and 2014–2015 includes spending related to a project to improve the agency's capability for responding to public enquiries. The project will be completed in 2014–2015.

Human Resources (Full-Time Equivalents – FTEs)

2013–2014	2014–2015	2015–2016
65	63	61

Program Expected Results	Performance Indicators
Canadians make informed decisions about their engagement in the electoral process.	• Percentage of Canadians who believe that they can make an informed decision about their engagement
Canadians understand the importance of voting and the value of participating in the electoral process.	• Percentage of Canadians who understand the importance of voting • Percentage of Canadians who understand the value of participating in the electoral process
Elections Canada and international electoral stakeholders improve their capacity to better administer the electoral process.	• Percentage of international and domestic stakeholders who intend to incorporate shared best practices
Parliamentarians have access to evidence-based information, allowing them to make informed decisions about existing and emerging electoral issues.	• Percentage of parliamentarians satisfied with the quality of the Chief Electoral Officer's recommendations reports

Planning Highlights

In 2013–2014, Elections Canada will continue to take actions to reduce barriers to voting experienced by certain groups of electors, with a particular focus on youth. It will conduct and use research to inform its activities. It will also emphasize sharing knowledge with key stakeholders to raise the level of awareness of declining voter turnout and the value of ongoing civic education. The overarching goal is to build understanding among youth of the importance of voting.

As part of its fiscal restraint plan, Elections Canada will limit its international role in 2013–2014 to contributing to the work of multilateral organizations, such as the Commonwealth Secretariat and the Organization of American States.

Activities in Support of Organizational Priorities in 2013–2014

The following planned initiatives within the Electoral Engagement program will also contribute to the agency's organizational priorities in 2013–2014.

Conduct Research

In 2013–2014, Elections Canada will undertake applied research to support its three-year business plan. In particular, it will focus on two areas:

- preparing the Chief Electoral Officer's 2014 report on the compliance and enforcement regime
- researching the administrative compliance practices needed to support a new operational compliance unit, which will be responsible for ensuring better compliance with standards and procedures applicable at polling sites

In support of the initiative to extend the use of the VIC to all electors, Elections Canada will conduct the research necessary to develop a new overall voter identification policy. This will support simplifying the administration of the voter identification regime, making it more consistent and coherent, while maintaining the integrity of the voting process.

The agency will also conduct fundamental research on various issues concerning the attitudes of Canadians toward democracy. This work will leverage the results from the Canadian Election Study, a leading academic longitudinal study on federal elections in Canada.

Promote Civic Education Programming

In 2013–2014, Elections Canada will undertake a number of initiatives to continue its civic education program. We will promote our civic education materials, and those of our partners, to current and future teachers by attending teachers' resource fairs across the country and conducting awareness campaigns through educator associations and publications.

We will work with and mobilize a variety of partners to reach and engage youth by organizing the third annual Canada's Democracy Week in September 2013. This event is built around the United Nations' International Day of Democracy on September 15.

We will identify a service provider to implement the highly successful parallel election program for youth who have not yet reached voting age. Held during federal general elections since 2004, this program enables students in participating elementary and high schools to practise casting a ballot and participate in the conduct of a parallel election.

Improve Youth Engagement

In 2013–2014, Elections Canada will conduct several projects aimed at developing knowledge and sharing it with key stakeholders to improve youth engagement. We will complete our focus group testing of Canadians aged 18 to 34, exploring ways to overcome motivational barriers to voting, and share our findings with relevant stakeholders. This research builds on findings from the National Youth Survey conducted immediately following the 2011 general election.

We will work with Elections BC to conduct a field experiment that measures the impact of specific mobilization efforts to encourage voting. The findings will be implemented during the provincial election in British Columbia in May 2013, and we will share them with a wide variety of stakeholder groups. This will be the first study of its kind in Canada.

Findings from the National Youth Survey indicate that youth who are contacted by political parties or candidates during an election are more likely to vote. In 2013–2014, Elections Canada will conduct a comparative study on innovative and successful best practices used by political parties in Canada and abroad to reach out to youth.

Provide Support for Parliamentarians

Elections Canada will be prepared to support parliamentarians by providing evidence-based information on emerging electoral issues. We will place a particular focus on the reports that the Chief Electoral Officer will present in spring 2013 to strengthen the electoral framework.

Internal Services

Program Description

In addition to carrying out programs that directly benefit Canadians, Elections Canada requires internal services to help fulfill its mandate. These services focus on human resources modernization, performance management, legal services, internal audits, financial and human resources management, and information management and technology.

Financial Resources ($ thousands)

Total Budgetary Expenditures (Main Estimates) 2013–2014	Planned Spending 2013–2014*	Planned Spending 2014–2015	Planned Spending 2015–2016
42,202	42,202	32,979	32,979

*Internal Services for 2013–2014 includes one-time spending for the Office Consolidation and Relocation project. The project will end in 2013–2014.

Human Resources (Full-Time Equivalents – FTEs)

2013–2014	2014–2015	2015–2016
145	136	132

Planning Highlights

In 2013–2014, all internal services at Elections Canada will continue to focus on enabling the agency's programs to meet its priorities and obligations, while ensuring adequate accountability and stewardship.

The Information Technology Sector will continue to provide the required technology and support to the 10 electoral boundaries commissions as they finalize their work. This sector will also play a pivotal role in delivering our three-year plan to improve services to electors in support of initiatives that have significant technology components – in particular, the new applications to support modernized field voter registration and enhanced enquiries services. Work will also continue to keep Elections Canada's information technology (IT) infrastructure current, maintain agency-specific systems and ensure efficient telecommunications services.

The Human Resources Sector provides the agency with strategic advice, corporate programs and services, and operational support, such as occupational health and safety and employee assistance programs. In 2013–2014, the sector will continue its efforts to develop the skills and competencies of its employees to deliver on its overall vision. The sector will also continue supporting the agency's efforts to close the representation gap for employment equity groups, especially women.

Elections Canada's corporate planning unit will be responsible for bringing coherence and alignment to our three-year plan and projects as well as reporting on our progress to external audiences. The unit will oversee the execution of the integrated plan developed in 2012–2013 to implement the new electoral boundaries resulting from the electoral boundaries readjustment process.

The Finance, Internal Audit and Administration Sector will continue to ensure sound financial management and provide corporate advice and guidance to the agency and the 10 electoral boundaries commissions. The sector will continue to provide expertise in the areas of procurement and contracting, internal auditing and management of real property, and it will meet its obligations in the areas of building services and physical and personnel security.

Activities in Support of Organizational Priorities in 2013–2014

The following additional planned initiatives within the Internal Services program will also contribute to the agency's organizational priorities in 2013–2014 by enabling its other three programs to achieve their expected results.

Complete the Office Consolidation and Relocation Project

Although the overall budget of $19.8 million remains the same, delays encountered in the office relocation project mean that a significant portion of expenditures originally forecast for 2012–2013 will be incurred in 2013–2014. Planned expenditures for 2013–2014 are $9.2 million. The phased-in relocation of the agency to its new location in Gatineau will begin in summer 2013 and will be completed in late fall 2013.

Ensure Compliance of the Website with Federal Accessibility Standards

In response to a Federal Court ruling to make federal government websites fully accessible to members of the public with disabilities, Elections Canada will continue to implement its three-year plan to make its web applications and static documents fully compliant. Work will continue over the period to ensure that all the existing content on our website meets accessibility guidelines by July 31, 2013.

Implement Financial Management

In 2013–2014, the agency will continue to develop and implement a financial management framework, which will focus on internal controls, including asset management. We will also develop and implement a security management framework, which will include a departmental security plan and a business continuity plan.

Prepare the Next Risk-Based Audit Plan

In 2013–2014, Elections Canada will review its programs and corporate functions to prepare its Risk-Based Audit Plan for the period 2013–2016. As part of this initiative, we will determine the scope of the audit to be undertaken in 2013–2014; it will include a range of continuous and compliance audits as well as reviews of high-risk activities.

Implement Workforce Adjustment Measures

Elections Canada has made every effort to limit the impact of fiscal restraint measures on its employees. Nevertheless, the completion of the zero-based-budgeting exercise in 2012–2013 confirmed that the agency lacked the funds required to continue to finance a number of indeterminate positions going forward. As a result, in 2012–2013, Elections Canada began implementing workforce adjustment measures and informed employees, on January 15, 2013, that 32 encumbered positions would be eliminated. The Human Resources Sector will continue to play a crucial role in guiding managers through the administration of workforce adjustment measures.

During this transition period, the sector will facilitate communication throughout the agency, provide advice and recommendations, liaise with central agencies, and provide training and support to employees going through career transition. Finally, the sector will ensure that Elections Canada meets the provisions of the Work Force Adjustment Directive, maximizes employment opportunities for affected and surplus employees, and minimizes involuntary job losses, while taking into account the agency's current and future operational requirements.

Develop a Change Management Approach

Elections Canada's personnel, both in Ottawa and in the field, will face several changes over the 2012–2015 period as a result of:

- measures required to address financial pressures
- relocation of the agency to Gatineau
- potential legislative change
- administrative improvements implemented for the 2015 general election

To assist our personnel through this period of transition, we will develop a full set of guidelines and tools to ensure that we implement a comprehensive change management approach.

We will also create a Change Management Committee, which will work in collaboration with the Corporate Strategy Office. (More information on this office is provided below.) The committee's mandate will be to provide Elections Canada with a standardized and integrated change management strategy as well as tools to support all change initiatives, monitor their execution and proactively foster employee engagement.

Strengthen Information Management

In keeping with direction from central agencies, Elections Canada continues to strengthen its information management program. As we prepare to consolidate all employees in a single building, we are taking this opportunity to identify information of business value, establish information-retention periods and dispose of electronic and paper information that is no longer required.

Additionally, we will extend our efforts to digitize paper records of business value, categorizing and storing them in a new corporate information structure. This information architecture will allow us to carry out a pilot project in 2013–2014 of a computer application that efficiently captures, retrieves and manages records in an electronic-information environment, while protecting the integrity of personal information.

Continue to Strengthen Information Technology

IT continues to be a key component of virtually all of the agency's business operations and plans for the 2015 general election. In 2013–2014, we will strengthen and standardize processes and technology to develop and support our IT products more efficiently. We will also update our multi-year investment plan and develop a strategic vision for IT.

In addition, Elections Canada will establish a new contract mechanism for telecommunications services for the 42nd general election. This innovative service-based vehicle will allow us to engage a single technology integrator, while avoiding long-term capital investments in technical assets that quickly depreciate in value and utility. Over the period, the Information Technology Sector will complete the necessary review and, where applicable, adjust our applications to ensure that they can operate with the new electoral districts created during the electoral boundaries readjustment process.

Explore Shared Services and Collaborative Service Arrangements

Elections Canada will continue to explore opportunities for common or shared services in the context of the relocation of its office to Gatineau, in the same building as other agents of Parliament, and to take advantage of government-wide common systems initiatives such as financial and human resources systems.

Use the Corporate Strategy Office to Support and Oversee Improvement Initiatives

As a means of ensuring the coherent delivery of its 2012–2015 business plan, which includes service delivery improvements for the next general election, Elections Canada established a Corporate Strategy Office in 2012. The office's mandate is to provide the Chief Electoral Officer and the Executive Committee with standardized and integrated reporting on all initiatives carried out under the business plan, monitor their execution and proactively manage corporate-level risks and interdependencies. The office will also enable the agency to strengthen its project management practices.

Section III: Supplementary Information

Financial Highlights

The future-oriented condensed financial statements presented below are intended to serve as a general overview of Elections Canada's financial operations. They have been prepared on an accrual accounting basis. They differ from the figures presented in previous sections because those are based on authorities voted by Parliament on a modified cash basis.

Future-Oriented Condensed Statement of Operations and Agency Net Financial Position (Unaudited)
For the Year (ended March 31)
($ thousands)

	$ Change	Forecast 2013–2014	Estimated Results 2012–2013
Total expenses	(9,225)	122,097	131,322
Total revenues	–	–	–
Net cost of operations before government funding and transfers	(9,225)	122,097	131,322
Agency net financial position	1,829	23,123	21,294

Elections Canada forecasts $122.1 million in expenses for 2013–2014. This represents a decrease of $9.2 million from the 2012–2013 estimated results, and is mainly the result of phasing out the quarterly allowances paid to political parties and finishing the work related to supporting the readjustment of federal electoral boundaries. The forecast for 2013–2014 includes the agency's operating expenses, wrap-up activities from the 41st general election, activities related to supporting the electoral boundaries readjustment process, the Office Consolidation and Relocation project, and quarterly allowances paid to political parties.

Future-Oriented Condensed Statement of Financial Position (Unaudited)
For the Year (ended March 31)
($ thousands)

	$ Change	Forecast 2013–2014	Estimated Results 2012–2013
Total net liabilities	(1,715)	22,057	23,772
Total net financial assets	(2,647)	16,903	19,550
Agency net debt	932	5,154	4,222
Total non-financial assets	2,761	28,277	25,516
Agency net financial position	1,829	23,123	21,294

The total net liabilities forecast for 2013–2014 are $22.1 million; accounts payable and accrued liabilities account for 63 percent of this figure. This represents a net decrease of $1.7 million from the 2012–2013 estimated results and is mainly a result of phasing out the quarterly allowances paid to political parties. It reduces the amount payable at year-end and has a direct impact on the net financial assets for 2013–2014 (due from the Consolidated Revenue Fund).

The total non-financial assets forecast for 2013–2014 are $28.3 million, an increase of $2.8 million over the 2012–2013 estimated results. Included in this increase is $2.5 million in tangible capital assets.

The full set of future-oriented financial statements can be found on the Elections Canada website.[2]

List of Supplementary Information Tables

All electronic supplementary information tables listed in this *2013–2014 Report on Plans and Priorities* can be found on the Elections Canada website.

- Details on transfer payment programs[3]
- All upcoming internal audits over the next three fiscal years[4]

Tax Expenditures and Evaluations Report

The tax system can be used to achieve public policy objectives through the application of special measures such as low tax rates, exemptions, deductions, deferrals and credits. The Department of Finance publishes cost estimates and projections for these measures annually in the *Tax Expenditures and Evaluations*[5] publication. The tax measures presented in the *Tax Expenditures and Evaluations* publication are the sole responsibility of the Minister of Finance.

Section IV: Other Items of Interest

New Legislation

An analysis of proposed amendments to electoral legislation with a potential impact on our business can be found on the Elections Canada website.[6]

Judicial Decisions and Proceedings

An analysis of judicial decisions and proceedings that may affect electoral legislation can be found on the Elections Canada website.[7]

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Endnotes

1 www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/ems-sgd/esp-pbc/me-bpd-eng.asp
2 www.elections.ca/error.aspx?aspxerrorpath=/content.aspx
3 www.elections.ca/error.aspx?aspxerrorpath=/content.aspx
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